

"Florence, Florence, you must not do that," he said huskily. "I can endure anything but that."

"Tell me you forgive me, then."

He took her hands and they closed on his with a wringing clasp.

"If you imagine there is anything to forgive, it is forgiven a thousand times over," he answered, raising her.

Tears flooded the dry hot eyes; she tried to speak, but had no words; so for thanks she pressed his hand vehemently to her lips. In the same instant a burst of childish laughter rang merrily through the house.

Little Florence was calling to some one, calling with breaks of noisy mirth as if enjoying some comical spectacle. She was heard skipping along the hall; the next minute she bounded in upon them, her hair flying rebelliously, her round face glowing like a damask rose. At sight of a stranger she paused, but recognising him ran forward holding up her mouth for a kiss.

"I have been having such fun," she explained with breathless eagerness. "Grandpa is back and I have covered him with flowers, and I am glad you came—he'll like to see you. They said grandpa wasn't coming back any more, like dear papa who has gone away to God for ever. But he has come," ended the little lass joyously. "He has come. Wait and I'll bring him."

"Not yet, darling, not yet," called the mother as quickly as she could find breath. But the child was beyond hearing. In another minute she was back, prattling excitedly as she led her grandfather by the hand, the remnants of flowers and grasses still clinging to him.

On entering the room he staggered, and would have fallen upon her but for the timely aid of the visitor. Was this shattered old man, grey and palsied, the once Napoleonic Dudley? He breathed stertorously as Evan and Florence placed him gently in a chair; but the old will power was not dead, and he rallied swiftly.

"I shall be myself in a moment," he told them in a thick whisper. "I shall be myself in a moment." And then, after a pause, and looking at Evan. "You will understand that this meeting tries me. I am not what I once was." And after yet another pause, "Well, sir, the whirligig of time brings strange changes—yes, undreamed-of changes. Who could have foreseen this? You will excuse a wrecked and